

## What is a project?

*"I am about to begin a project – I hate that word – but we get hold of some youngsters who are way off track, are poorly adjusted and have had too many educators running after them all their lives, and make them do some physical training with boxers, then they have to cook a meal, no hierarchy or tall hats, quite simple."*

Søren Gericke, chef, etc.

The word *project* comes from Latin and means to make a draft or a plan. *Project* is the Latin word for planning.

When I wrote "Projektlederbogen" in 2000, I listed the following project characteristics:

- a clearly defined purpose
- a date when it must be completed
- unknown factors and risks
- limits on costs and resource consumption
- new experiences
- new results
- challenges to thinking in grooves
- challenges to a static organization
- interdisciplinary cooperation

I still think these characteristics constitute a good definition, but I naturally defer to the fact that various international organizations have also provided their own definitions. I have therefore listed them below (There is a more detailed review of the individual organizations in Part 2 and Part 6 where CMMI is concerned).

### *International project management organizations*

PMI: Project Management Institute

ISO: International Organization for Standardization

IPMA: International Project Management Association

PRINCE2: Projects In Controlled Environments

CMMI: Capability Maturity Module Integration

APM: Association of Project Management

### Organisation

<b>PMI</b>	A project is a temporary endeavour under-taken to create a unique product or service. Temporary means that every project has a definite beginning and end. Unique means that the product or service is different in some distinguishing way from all other products or services.
<b>ISO 10006</b>	A project is a unique process, consisting of a set of coordinated and controlled activities with start and finish dates, undertaken to achieve an objective conforming to specific requirements, including the constraints of time, cost and resources. A process is a set of interrelated or interacting activities which transforms inputs into outputs. An activity is the smallest identified item of work in a project or process.
<b>IPMA</b>	A project is an undertaking which is in principal characterized by its uniqueness of conditions, e.g. as objectives, clear time, cost and quality and other conditions, differentiation to other endeavours, project specific organization. A project is an endeavour in which human, material and financial resources are organized in a novel way, to undertake a unique scope of work, of given specification, within constraints of cost and time, following a standard life cycle, so as to achieve beneficial change defined by quantitative and qualitative objectives. A project is a unique set of coordinated activities, with defined starting and finishing points, undertaken by an individual or organization to meet specific objectives within a defined schedule, cost and performance parameters.
<b>PRINCE2</b>	A management environment that is created for the purpose of delivering one or more business products according to a specified Business Case. A temporary organization that is needed to produce a unique and predefined outcome or result at a pre-specified time using predetermined resources.
<b>CMMI</b>	A project is an undertaking requiring concerted effort that is focused on developing and/or maintaining a specific product. The product may include hardware, software, and other components. Typically a project has its own funding, cost accounting, and delivery schedule.

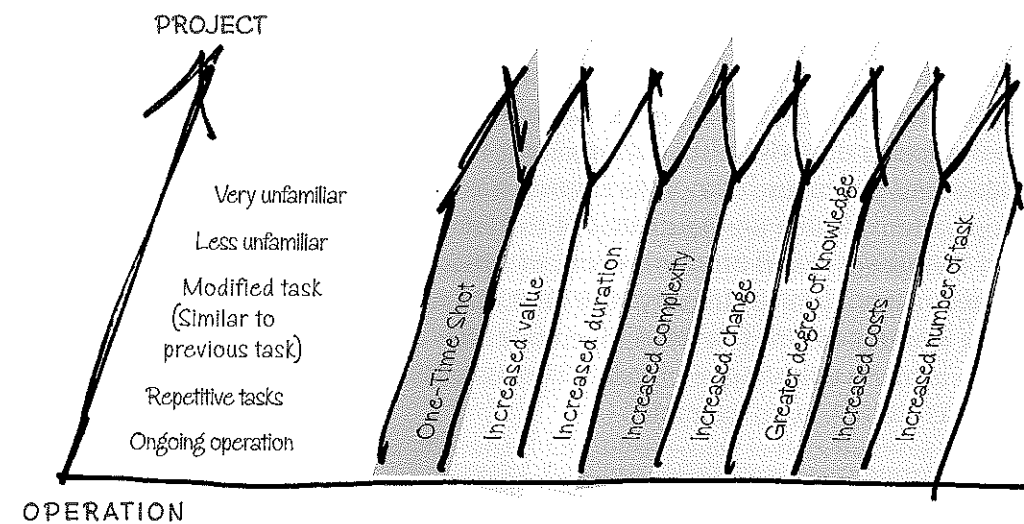
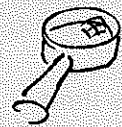


Figure 4 Operations and project

I hope I have succeeded in providing a fairly clear picture of what a project is through the comments above. Finally, an example from a production company.



### The planning system

Things at the factory had been developing at a tremendous pace over a period of five years. The amount of work that had been coming in, and thereby turnover, had increased dramatically with the result that the foremen began to find it difficult keeps tabs on all the orders that were being produced at the same time. After a couple of incidents involving defects and delays, the director decided that something must be done. It was quite clear to him that the foremen and production personnel needed help. It was also clear that they had more than enough to do to keep the factory running and would not be able to cope with a comprehensive restructuring of working methods. The director therefore decided to establish a project to address

these matters. Ole was appointed project manager and his project involved selecting and implementing a new planning system at the factory. Ole and his project group had been looking at the market for planning systems, had carried out analyses of what was needed at the factory, and finally chosen the most suitable system, which he then bought and implemented. The project had been responsible for all elements of the process, including training users and maintenance personnel.

When the system was commissioned and the last employees had been trained, the director said to Ole, "We'll close out the project now and turn the system over to operations."

The figure below shows one way of illustrating project types.

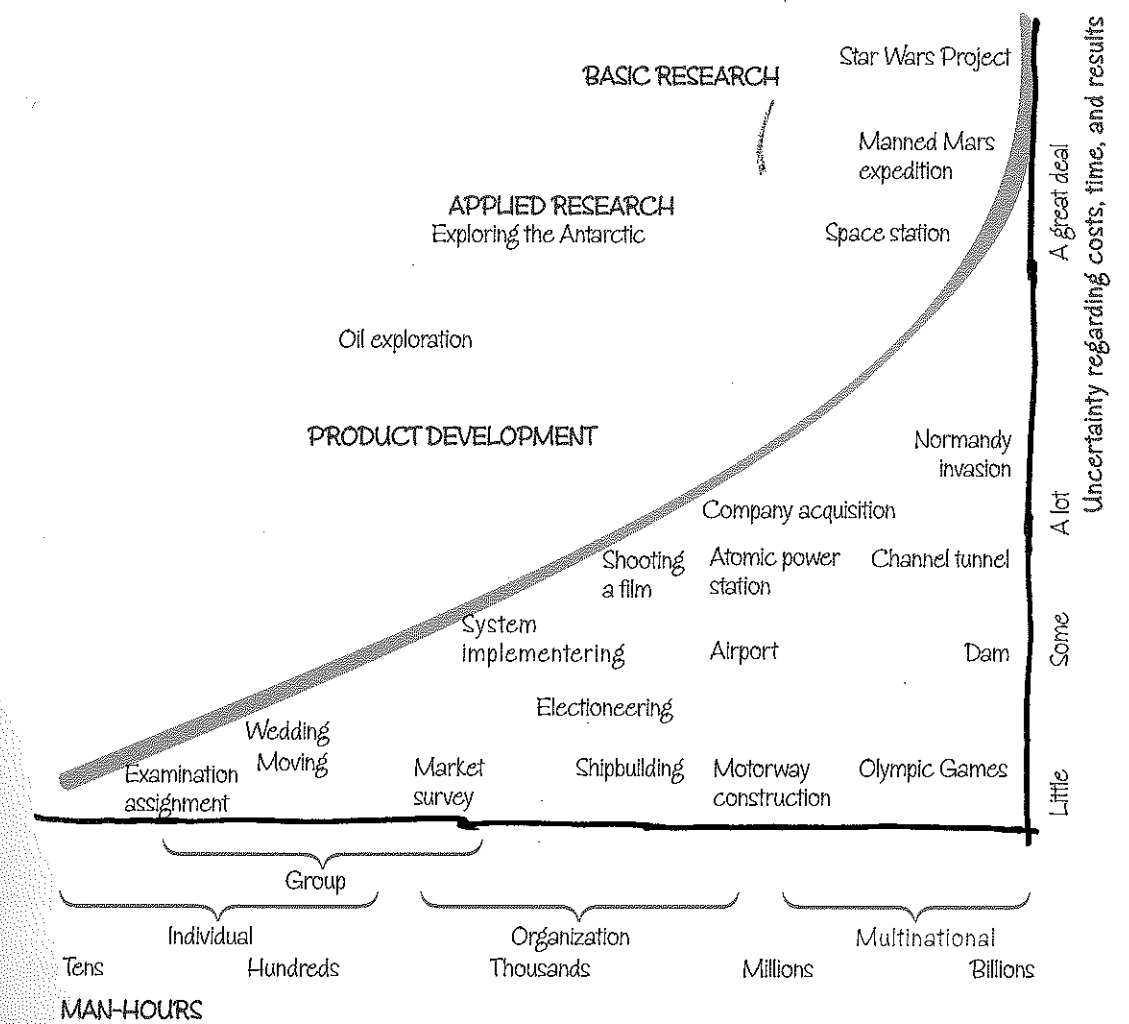


Figure 5 Different types of projects – an overview



## Project management



*"The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.*

*And God looked upon the earth and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.*

*And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.*

*Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.*

*And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.*

*A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower second and third stories shalt thou make it.*

*And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.*

*But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.*

*And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female.*

*Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.*

*And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.*

*Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he.*

Genesis, chapter 6, verses 11-22, where Noah is given his project by God and performs it to the letter.

Project management is naturally all about managing a project, but let us see what the international organizations have to say about this:

Organization	Definition
PMI	Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements.
ISO	Project management involves planning, organizing, monitoring, controlling, and reporting on all aspects of a project and the motivation of all those involved in it to achieve the project's objectives.
IPMA	Project management involves planning, organizing, monitoring and controlling all aspects of a project and the motivation of all involved to achieve the project objectives safely and within the agreed time, cost and performance criteria.
PRINCE2	Project management involves planning, organizing, monitoring and controlling all aspects of the project and the motivation of all those involved in it to achieve the project objectives on time and at the specified cost, quality and performance.
APM	Project Management is widely regarded as the most efficient way of introducing unique change. Project management is the discipline of managing projects successfully. Project management provides the "single point of integrative responsibility" needed to ensure that everything on the project is managed effectively to ensure a successful project deliverable.

A more detailed review of these international organizations follows in Part 2.

As the overview shows, the project manager discipline contains many elements of ordinary, general management. This is not least obvious when we remember Peter Senge's statement to the effect that a manager should spend at least 70% of his time on project management (page 24). In general, it is difficult to argue that there are any management areas that a project manager should not be involved in – so I will refrain from doing so.

So there are no few demands on a project manager, and we will look more closely at this in Part 3. But by contrast, it is often far easier to become a project manager than a line manager. Many people have almost had the title of project manager thrust on them without having the ability to do the job. I have seen project management called the "accidental profession" in American literature on the subject.



*You must pass tests and attend refresher courses to be allowed to drive a truck around a warehouse, but the management of a multi-million project can be entrusted without ceremony to somebody who has received no training in project management at all.*

Anonymous project worker

Why is project management such a difficult discipline? Because, among other things, as we discussed in the previous section, projects mean